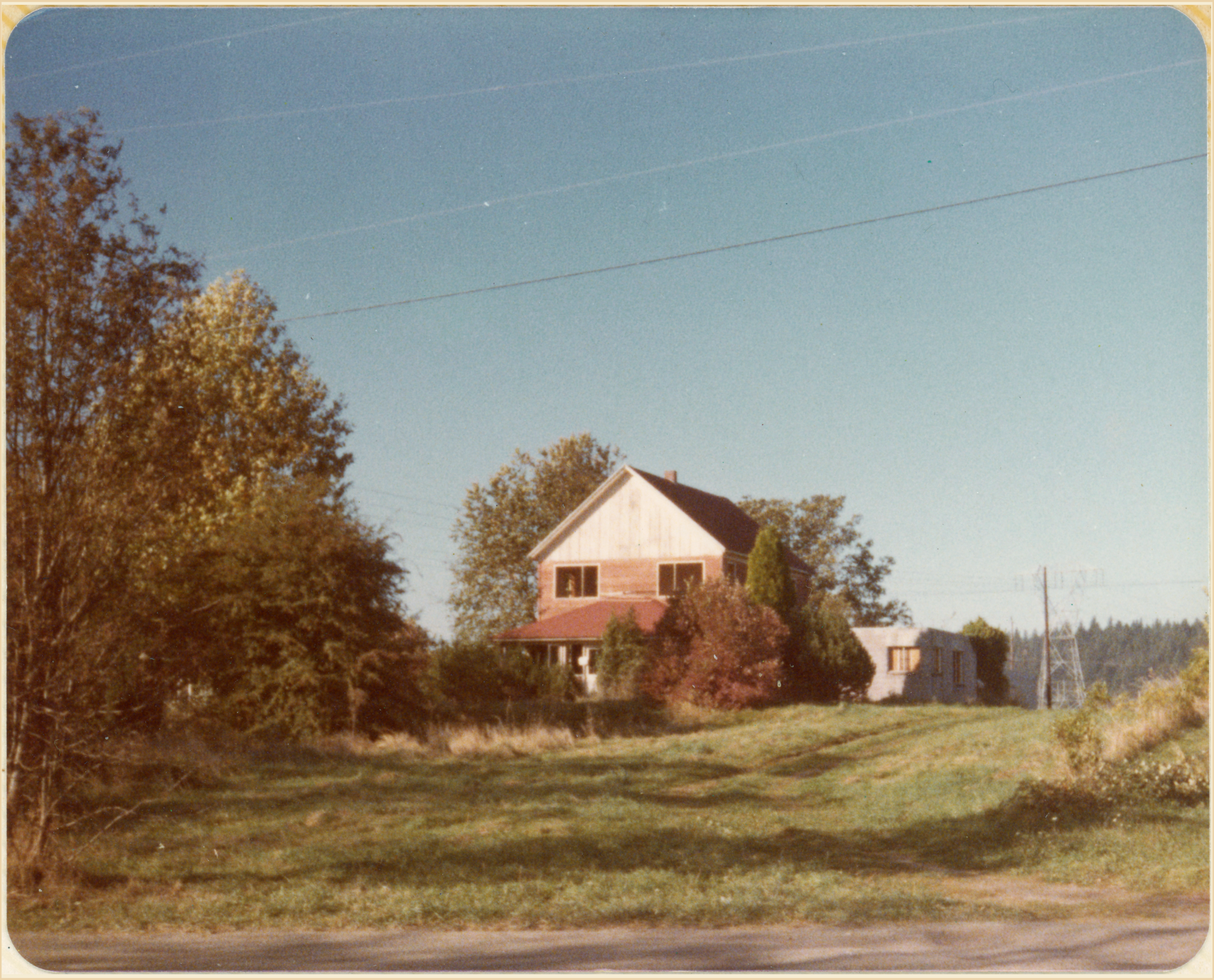

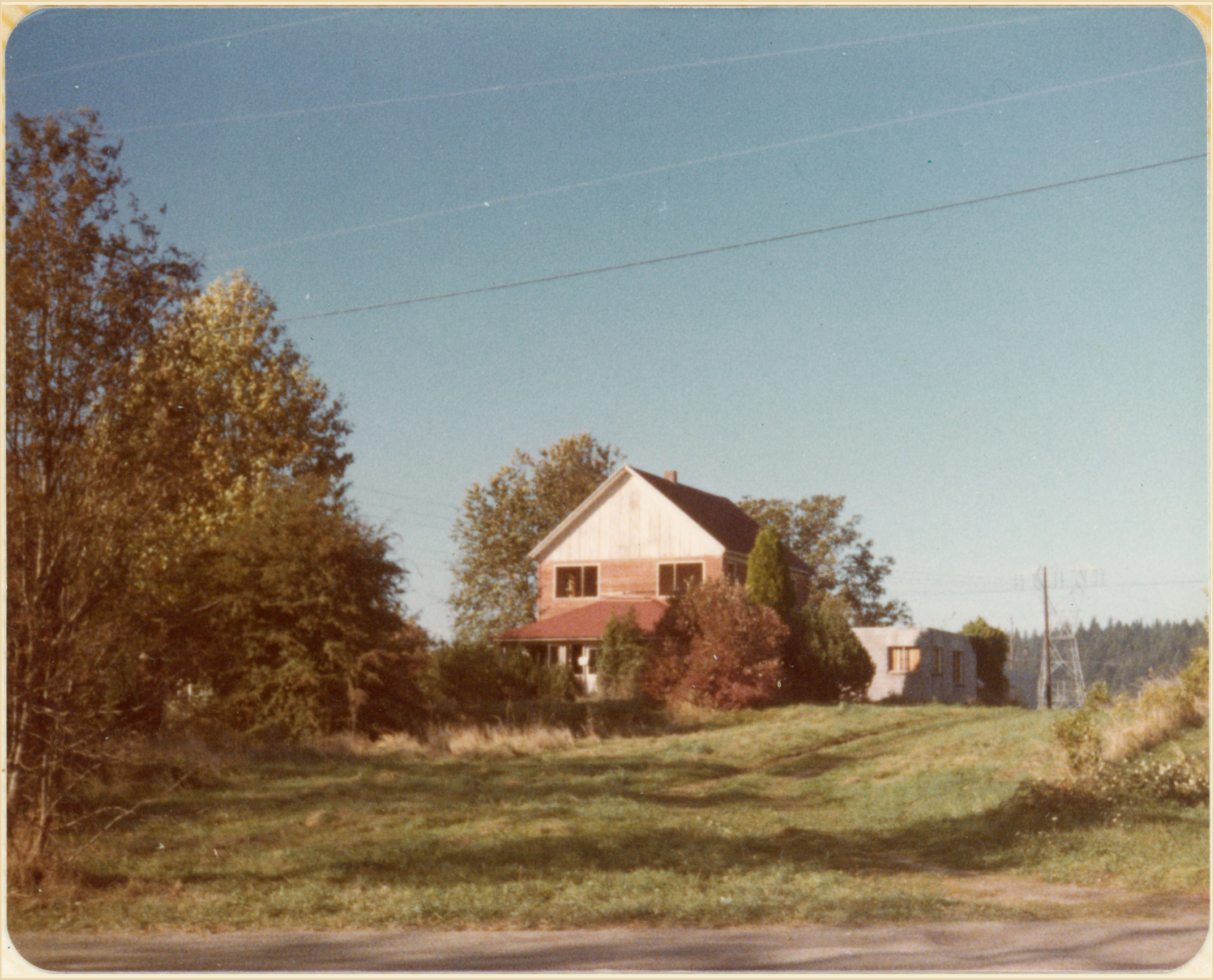

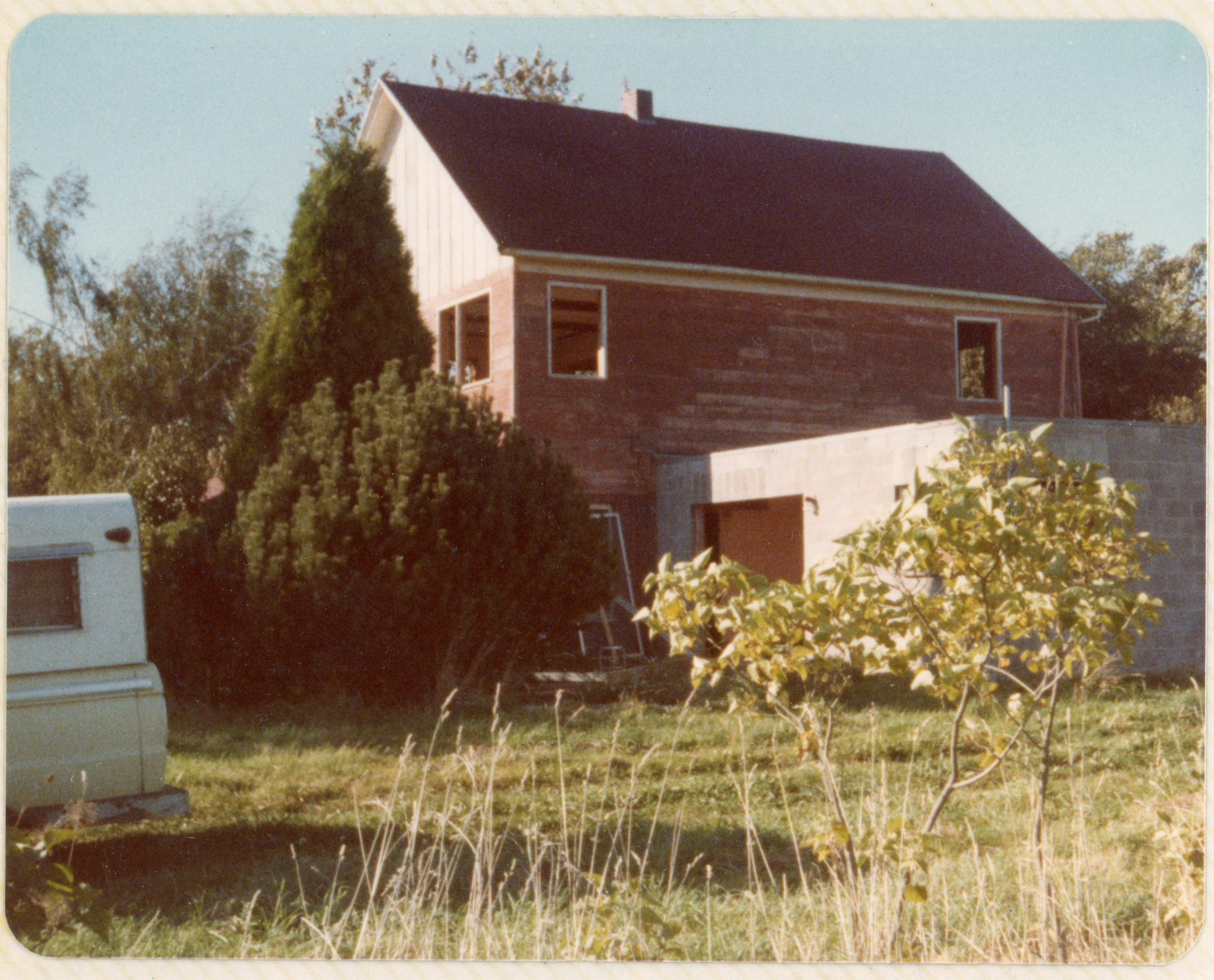

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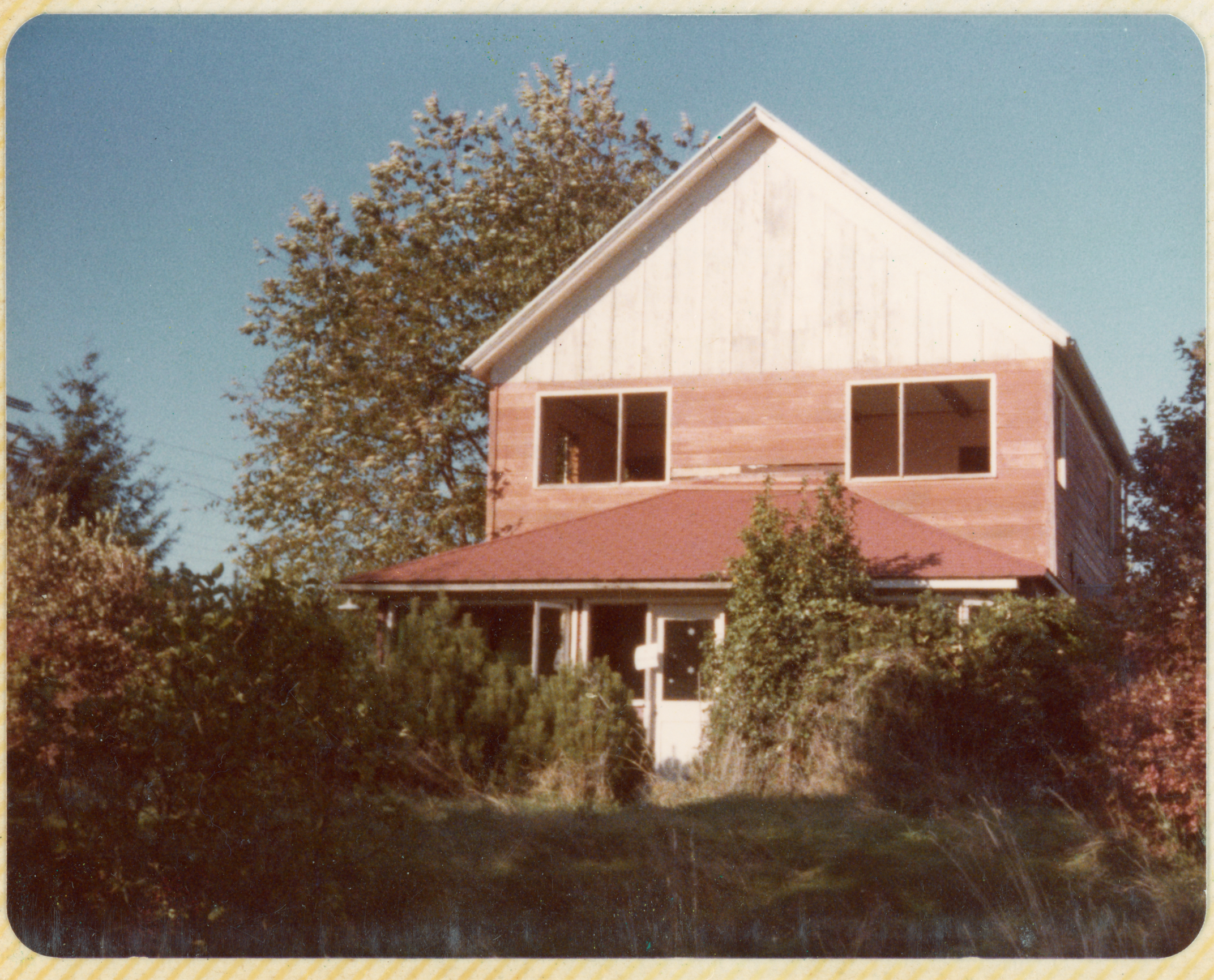

POST RECORD - "GUIDE"
NOV. 1-1978

A nice place for a picnic?

By BERNICE SENTI PLUCHOS
POST Special Writer

It was a little bit of an old neighborhood reunion and "Town Hall Tonight" at the Parker's Landing National Historic Site meeting Monday of last week, with mistory buffs and early Camas-Washougal people exchanging reminiscences and pictures in the PUD meeting room.

Both the group and the Camas-Washougal Port Commission, with Harold Sleight as spokesman, agreed that an attractive picnic area for the people should be opened on the banks of the Columbia in front of the house.

Mrs. Harold Roley told of walking along that spot as a girl in the early 1900s. "We picked up Indian arrow heads by the bucketful. But mother made us stand back from the Parker's Landing dock. It was starting to fall down."

Henry Sadewasser told the interested group of participating in the moving of the Van Vleet house in 1914. It had been 300 feet west of their property, and the Wrights (Van Vleet's parents) had it moved to accommodate their eight children.

The origins of the house remain hazy at this time. Alice Gee, temporary chairman of the group states, "We need details and pictures about Parker's Landing and the Van Vleet house. I hope people will get in touch with committee members if they can add to our information."

A committee representinng various organizations and interests in the community was formed. Members are: Harold and Mabel Roley, Meryl Steele, Rosalie MacRae, Sara Cowan, Harold Sleight, Gus and Bernice Pluchos, Roger and Susan O'Hara, Cliff Crawford, Alice Gee, and Ken Nowell.

Van Vleet house burns

CHARRED WALLS AND FRAME are all that remain of the Van Vleet house at Parker's Landing, Washougal, following a fire just before 11 p.m. Friday While arson is suspected, the state fire marshall's investigators will continue to probe the cause of the fire.

Thirteen firefighters and two engines headed for the fire at 10:48 p.m. Friday, according to a Washougal Fire Department spokesman.

The house, now owned by the Port of Camas-Washougal, had been slated for razing when a number of local persons urged its preservation for possible use as a museum. The property itself is on the National Register of Historic Places, based on Indian artifacts reportedly found on the site.

The Van Vleet house is believed to have been built in 1878, in Fern Prairie and later moved to the river site.

Even though the house is destroyed, there are several groups in the community proposing the site be used as some sort of park or tourist attraction, rather than allowing the port to convert it into a marina parking facility. — POST photo

'A kind of stark beauty'

To the Editor:

The Van Vleet house has burned under mysterious circumstances. But even flames could not destroy the beauty of the frame of this 100 year old house. Two corners of the back of the house are intact. The fireplace rises straight up through the middle, untouched by the fire.

True, the house is a charred, black skeleton, but the strong frame refused to bow its head and fall. You can see the timbers are still straight as they stand bare now against the chilly autumn sky. One senses a kind of stark beauty here.

And one can sense and envy the kind of pride that went into the construction of this house over 100 years ago. It was a strong house, built to last and not fall and it kept its promise!

It outlasted all the catastrophes of our day including the Columbus Day Storm of 1962 or 1963. And now, unbelievably, the great frame of the Van Vleet house has outlasted its worst enemy, fire.

Jean Zaruistowski
115 NE Garfield St. Camas

POST RECORD 'GUIDE'
10/1/78